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# Getting Dresses

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**Farmers'  
Bulletin  
No. 1964**

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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# *Fitting Dresses*

by

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In these war days many women are making, remodeling, and altering dresses at home. Home sewing is thrifty. It is also a way of doing for yourself, so that the Nation's production lines can turn out greater amounts of what it takes to win the war.

For most women who make dresses, the biggest problems arise in fitting. It takes patience and care to fit a dress well. But if you keep essential points in mind and follow the rules of the game, a good fit is not hard to achieve.

Patience and care in fitting are richly rewarded. When a dress does fit properly, it becomes a source of real satisfaction. The well-fitted dress looks well. It feels easy and comfortable, yet is snug enough to have that look of belonging to its wearer. It does not have to endure unnecessary pulls and strains. Materials are conserved and money is saved.

A good fit begins with your choice of a pattern. Choose the best style and size. If necessary, alter the pattern to correspond to body measurements. This will make your fitting job easier and more successful, too. When you buy a ready-made dress, take time to try it on—so as to avoid alterations as much as possible.

But fitting difficulties arise even with the best of care. Perhaps the pattern was not properly altered before the dress was cut out. Or perhaps you have to buy a dress that does not fit perfectly and it would be a substantial saving to alter it at home. In either case, there are fitting problems which must be solved.

This bulletin deals with fitting after the dress is cut and basted or after the ready-made dress is bought. It does not deal with the special problems of altering patterns.

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# HOW TO KNOW A GOOD FIT

A dress that fits well adapts itself to the wearer's body. It brings out good points and skillfully hides poor ones.

You will know a good fit by—

**Direction of grain of goods.**—Crosswise yarns are parallel to the floor at center front and back bust line and hip line, unless the dress has unusual style details. Lengthwise yarns on the sleeve cap lie in the direction of the arm when it hangs straight at the side. This varies slightly on different figures but in general the crosswise yarns are also parallel to the floor (fig. 1).

**Direction of seam lines.**—Seam lines that lie and hang straight keep the dress in proper line on the figure. They set becomingly and smoothly to the shoulders.

Armhole seams make a good curve underneath the arm and over the top of the shoulder. They are straight in front and back of the arm except when special style features, such as extended shoulders, require otherwise.

The waistline seam appears to be straight around the figure—it dips slightly in front, following the natural waist curve.

Underarm waist seams and skirt seams hang straight down—no swinging to the back or front. (See fig. 2.)

**Smooth lines.**—You can expect some folds to form in a dress as the wearer moves. But when she sits or stands still, there should be no unbecoming folds.

**Wearing comfort.**—The properly fitted dress is comfortable when the wearer stands, sits, or moves around. It is snug where fashion demands, but never feels tight or strained.

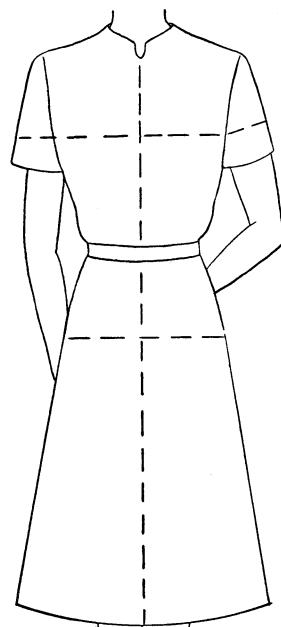


Figure 1

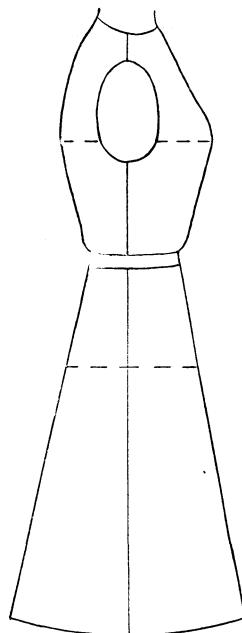


Figure 2

There are likely to be fitting difficulties and the dress may never fit if—

**1. The style is not suited to the wearer's figure.**—Simple styles are always in good taste and can be fitted more easily than elaborate ones.

**2. The pattern is not the right size, or not altered to fit.**—Get a pattern with measurements corresponding as nearly as possible to your body measurements. Do not select a pattern by the size of ready-mades you wear. Ready-mades are not always made like nor sized the same as patterns.

**3. The dress is carelessly cut and made.**—Carelessness in laying the pattern on the goods or in pinning, basting, or stitching often results in a dress that fits poorly and cannot be made to fit well.

## **HELPS TOWARD A GOOD FIT**

**Cut with care.**—Be sure the pattern is laid on the cloth so that the pattern perforations which indicate the straight of the goods are parallel with the lengthwise yarns. Never sacrifice the straightness of the goods to save material—better piece the goods, if necessary.

When cutting out the dress, allow an extra  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch on the shoulder seams (particularly on the back shoulder seam), the underarm, and side seams. These make changes possible. However, be sure to mark the original seam lines for the first basting. Allowing an extra inch at the bottom of a blouse may prevent some fitting problems.

**Sew carefully.**—For a good fit, do accurate pinning, marking, basting, and stitching. Also take care that:

1. Seams are straight.
2. Darts when stitched have no ugly pouches at the ends.
3. Tucks are straight.
4. Fullness is distributed evenly without puckers or pleats.
5. Facings and hems fit smoothly.

**Press as you sew.**—Seam lines and darts all lie flatter when pressed. Seams should always be pressed before they are crossed by another seam. It is especially worth while to press each seam as it is finished when you work on wool or rayon. One final pressing will not give the same results. You can plan your sewing so it is not necessary to reheat the iron for every seam.

**Know the figure you are fitting.**—Study the figure you are fitting, using a full-length mirror if you are sewing for yourself. Individual differences in weight distribution and bones often cause fitting problems and must be given special attention when making a dress. They may cause folds or throw the grain of the goods out of line.

**Fit over correct undergarments.**—Fitting should be done over the same clothes that will be worn with the dress. A properly fitted foundation garment makes for a good fit.

**Watch posture.**—Do not try to fit a person who is wriggling, twisting, slumped—or standing poker stiff, either. When fitting yourself, keep your body in a position as natural as possible.

**Do not fit too snugly.**—Test to see if the dress is too tight for comfortable walking, sitting, and moving the arms. Figure defects are more noticeable when a dress fits too closely.

**Use all possible helps.**—When you work alone, it may help to compare measurements with those of a dress that fits well. A dress form is useful in checking the direction and location of seam and hem lines. It does not solve all fitting difficulties.

**Guard the neck and armhole lines.**—Do not trim the neck line or armhole without first marking a line and being sure it is right. (See p. 6.) Then leave a generous seam allowance beyond the marked seam line. If the neck seems snug, frequently it is because of the seam allowance, which will be taken up in the seam.

**Use a dress hanger.**—Keep the dress on a hanger when you are not working on it. This prevents many wrinkles. It also gives bias sections a chance to sag into their natural shapes.

## DARTS ARE USEFUL FITTING AIDS

Darts can be used to take up fullness and to shape and direct fullness where needed. Tucks and gathers do the same with softer effect. When you use darts, try different places until you get a smooth, becoming line. In fitting, rarely take up as much as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches of fullness in one dart. Two or more small darts are usually better than one large one. The smaller the amount of material to be taken up, the shorter the dart can be.

**Front shoulder darts** remove wrinkles from the shoulder down to the bust. They also straighten the grain of the goods. Direct the shoulder fullness or darts toward or over the bust.

**Back shoulder darts** from the back shoulder seam to the shoulder blade give ease across the back. They improve the fit on a round-shouldered person.

**Neck-line darts**, tucks, or gathers at the back make a dress fit snugly at the neck and yet allow fullness over the back. Such darts may be straight or diagonal. They may be stitched on the right or wrong side.

**Underarm darts** give ease and can be used to shift the crosswise grain of goods below the bust. Usually one or more darts from the underarm seam are placed below but pointing toward the bust line. Generally, any one underarm dart should be not more than  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch wide or more than 3 inches long.

**Waistline darts** are often placed in a blouse at points directly below the bust or shoulder blade to give needed ease.

**Skirt darts** from the waistline in the side back or front make for smoothness between the hip and a snug waistline. Do not space back skirt darts too far apart on a figure with broad hips.

**Elbow darts** properly located give elbow room and hold fullness in the right place. When locating such darts, bend the arm to find the elbow point and place the darts or gathers at the bend.

## A PLAN OF FITTING

Every woman soon learns the easiest procedure for her to follow in fitting a dress. Pin and baste together the different parts—blouse, sleeves, skirt—of the dress in readiness for the first fitting. A basting line that marks the center back and center front helps in fitting. Put the dress on, adjust it, and pin the openings together accurately.

Before doing any actual fitting, study the general effect of all sides of the dress on the figure in a full-length mirror. Decide what is good—and what needs changing. Check to see if the lengthwise yarns drop straight at the center front and center back and if the crosswise yarns are parallel to the floor—especially across the bust line and the hip line. Keep them this way throughout the fitting.

In the pages ahead you will find detailed instructions for fitting different parts of a dress. Following is a suggested procedure to use when fitting a dress.

Fit the blouse first. Fasten a string around the waistline to keep the fullness in place. Since properly placed shoulder seams act as an anchor to the dress, start the fitting with the shoulders. If the pattern calls for shoulder pads they should be in place before fitting is done. Then fit the neck line. This helps to hold the shoulder seams in place. The bust and back are fitted next and then the armholes are made ready for the sleeves.

Before fitting the skirt adjust waistline fullness to the proper location. Pin the skirt to the waistline, matching center front, center back, and side seams with corresponding points of the waist. The waistline, like the shoulder seams, is an anchorage place. After it is correctly fixed, the hips can be fitted.

During the first fitting, slip the basted sleeves onto the arms to test their width and length. After the first or later fittings, when all necessary changes have been made in the rest of the dress, pin and baste in the sleeves. Examine the sleeves on the figure carefully from the front, back, and sides for fit, comfort, and the position of the grain of the goods. See that the armhole seam line and the fullness in the sleeve cap are well placed. Make any desirable changes.

If many changes are necessary in any part of the fitting, rebaste and try on the dress again before the final machine stitching.

## FITTING THE NECK AND SHOULDERS

The location and length of the shoulder seam vary with the type of garment, with the individual figure, and with the shoulder effect desired. Generally, the seam lies along the top of the shoulder and should not be noticeable from the front or the back when the dress is worn. However, on a round-shouldered woman, it may be well to place the shoulder seam slightly back of the normal line and cut the neck line high in the back. This makes her look more erect. On the overly erect person, the line is more becoming if directly on top of the shoulder.

The normal neck line should be made on a nicely curving line, lying close to the neck at the sides and back and comfortably snug but not tight. A cord or short chain around the neck helps to show the normal curve of the neck line (fig. 3). This curve has as landmarks the prominent neck bone at the back of the neck and the point just above the collarbone at center front.

Always allow at least a  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch seam when you shape or pin the neck line. Most neck-line alterations require changes in the shoulder seams as well.

When fitting shoulders, first see that the crosswise grain of the goods is kept straight at and above the bust. Also keep the lengthwise yarns of the waist front parallel to the center back and front. To do this, it may be necessary to rip the seam and change the amount and place of the shoulder fullness. Darts may be used to take up extra fullness. If necessary, take up or let out the shoulder seams so as to place them correctly (fig. 3).

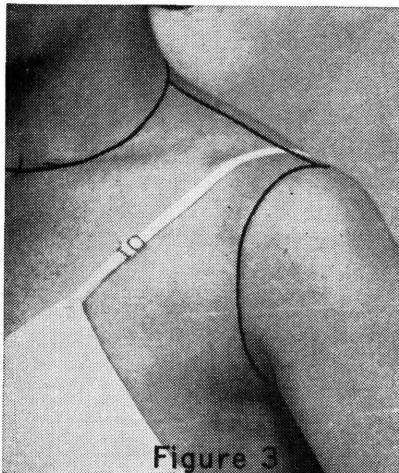


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows correct location for shoulder line, neck line, and armhole line.

This may mean letting out one side of the seam more than the other or making the depth of one end of the seam more or less than the regulation amount.

**Shoulder line too long.**—This makes the armhole line fall too far down on the arm, and often pulls the neck line from the side of the neck.

A dress may be too long on the shoulders because the figure has narrow shoulders in proportion to the bust, and the pattern was selected by the bust measure. In such cases, the pattern should have been altered before the dress was cut.

Sometimes widening the shoulders by adding shoulder pads, if they are in style, will solve the difficulty.

A slight amount of extra shoulder length can be removed by trimming the armhole over the top. But be careful—if you cut out much, the armhole will be too large for the sleeve.

Another way to remove extra shoulder length in the dress is to make small darts at the back of neck to pull up shoulder line slightly.

If the shoulder line is much too long, rip the shoulder seams. Put the extra length into small tucks at the back of the neck line or in the back shoulder seam. Take up the extra width in the front shoulder seam with tucks or shirring.

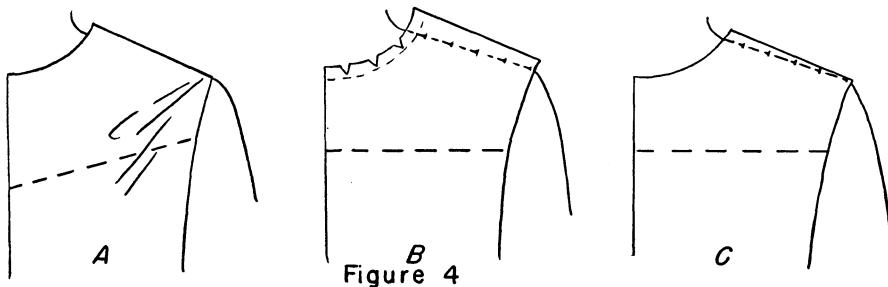
**Shoulder line too short.**—The pattern was too narrow across the shoulders and should have been widened before being used. If the material is firmly woven, a small amount can be added to the shoulders by taking smaller seams than originally planned. In most cases, however, there is no remedy except to piece the blouse in such a way that the shoulders are lengthened and the piecing becomes a part of the design.

**Diagonal wrinkles from shoulder tip to center front or back.**—The armhole end of the shoulder seam appears strained. The shoulder seam stands up from the shoulder line near the base of the neck (fig. 4, A).

The shoulders are too square for shoulder line of garment. For a slender figure, the best method is to rip the shoulder seam and lift it at the neck until the wrinkles are removed. Gradually slope the seam to the shoulder tip, keeping its direction correct (fig. 4, B). Pin and mark the shoulder seam. If it is a high-necked dress and this adjustment makes the neck a trifle too small, clip the neck line—avoid clipping into its seam line. If the neck is very tight, recut it by the pattern. (See also Neck Line Too High or Too Tight, p. 10.)

For stout figures and if the seam is wide enough, let out the shoulder seam at the armhole line (fig. 4, C). Then draw a new stitching line from the neck to armhole line and stitch. This gives a little extra room

in the armhole. It requires increasing the sleeve-cap length by trimming out a little at under part of sleeve cap. Avoid making the armhole too deep.



**Folds from sides of neck toward armholes.**—These slanting folds form when the base of the neck is large or shoulders slope more than the pattern allows (fig. 5, A). First try shoulder pads (if they are in style) to square off the shoulders of the garment. If this is not satisfactory and the neck edge is close-fitting across the back, clip the neck edge in a few places—but not as deep as the seam allowance. Or if the shoulder-seam allowance permits, let it out at the base of the neck. Or take a little deeper seam allowance as the shoulder seam approaches the armhole (fig. 5, B). This latter method removes wrinkles and raises the grain at the armhole but may leave the armhole too high under the arm. To alter this, see page 21.

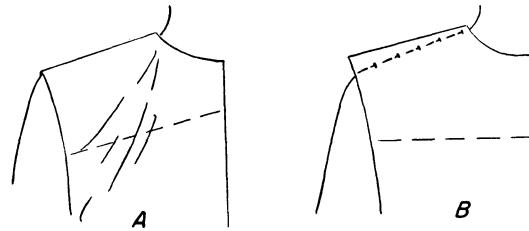


Figure 5

**Wrinkles across back of neck.**—The back of the dress across the shoulders is too tight or the neck line may be too high (fig. 6, A). A cushion of fat on the back of the neck may cause this difficulty.

If the dress neck is too tight and high, cut the neck line deeper at the back. The collar, if used, will have to be lengthened so it corresponds to the new stitching line.

You may release some width at the back by shortening and narrowing any darts or tucks in the neck or shoulder line. If the back feels too tight, rip the sleeves from the back of the dress at least from the top of

shoulder to underarm. Baste the sleeves in again, taking a smaller seam from the back of the dress but not from the sleeve. However, this can be done safely only if the material is firmly woven and the seam allowance wide enough to withstand the strain across the back.

It may be necessary to rip and repin the shoulder seam, taking up more of the back seam near the neck line and less at the armhole, so as to keep the crosswise grain straight across the upper back (fig. 6, B). Keep the direction of the shoulder seam correct.

If none of these changes improve the fit of the dress, it may be because the dress is too small and a new back or yoke will have to be cut from the same or contrasting material.

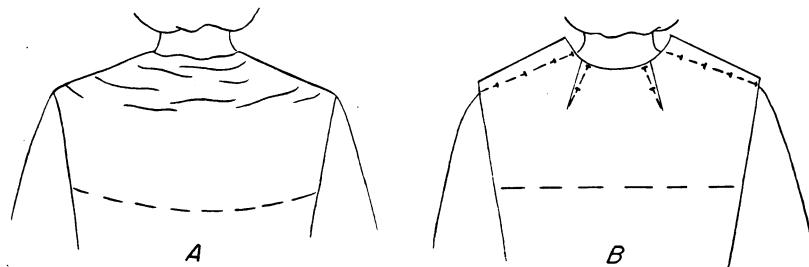


Figure 6

**Neck line bulges at front.**—The neck line may have been stretched or the garment cut too wide across the chest. The figure may have a particularly flat chest.

If the neck line is only slightly stretched, place two rows of running stitches around the neck line—one on the seam line, one just above. Draw up until neck line fits the neck closely (fig. 7, A). Adjust gathers, keeping the correct shoulder line and lengthwise grain at center front and center back. Sometimes refitting the shoulder line will remove a slight bulge.

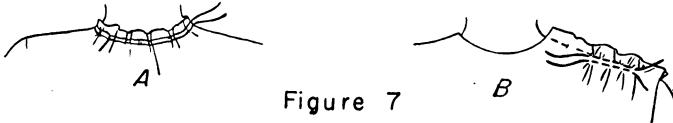


Figure 7

To fit a larger neck-line bulge, rip the shoulder seam, smooth extra front fullness up and out into darts, tucks, or shirring in the front shoulder seam (fig. 7, B). Refit shoulder seams, keeping the seam-line direction correct and lengthwise yarns straight at center front and back. This widens the front neck line, so there is less seam allowance for putting on the collar. If the bulge is so extreme that the neck line would be too wide, it may be necessary to fill in with a shaped band of cloth. Make this a part of the design of the dress or cover with a collar.

**Neck line bulges at back.**—The garment is too wide at the neck line. The figure may be round-shouldered or have a roll of flesh at the back of the neck, causing the neck line of the garment to bulge.

If the bulge is slight, ease in extra fullness at the back neck line when putting on facing or collar. Or, take in the fullness with small darts, tucks, or Shirring at the back neck line before finishing it.

For a large bulge, rip shoulder and underarm seams, raise back shoulder seam to straighten crosswise grain and to smooth out the bulge. Refit new shoulder seam, using darts on back shoulder seam if necessary. Refit underarm seams. Relocate back neck line and armhole line.

**Neck line too wide and too low.**—If the neck line stands away from the sides of the neck, try taking deeper shoulder seams at the neck or using back or front neck-line darts. In doing this, be careful not to draw the lengthwise or crosswise yarns of the goods out of line.

If the neck line is too low in front and if there is enough extra seam allowance at the lower front of blouse, the entire front may be lifted. Rip shoulder and underarm seams. Raise front and refit shoulder seams. This will make the shoulder-seam allowance on the front wider than on the back. Raise front underarm seam above back underarm seam as much as was raised on the shoulder (fig. 8). Mark new neck line and armhole line. If these changes are not possible, build up the neck line in the front or at the sides and cover the piecing with a collar, facing, or a shaped band.

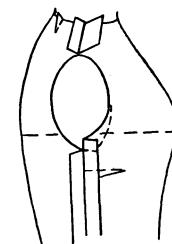


Figure 8

**Neck line too high or too tight, with crosswise wrinkles in front or back.**—A large neck, plump figure, or poor posture may make the dress neck line too high and too snug. Or the front or back of the blouse may be too narrow near the neck line. Very carefully clip into the neck line at the tight places (fig. 9, A). Do not clip into stitching line.

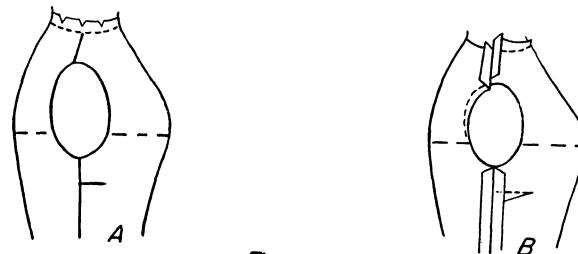


Figure 9

Of if this does not correct the difficulty, it is sometimes possible, after ripping the shoulder seam, to slip either the front or back, as the case may be, toward the center (fig. 9, B). This relieves the tightness. Pin and baste the shoulder seams. Mark new neck and armhole lines.

## COLLAR DIFFICULTIES

**Neck-line seam shows where flat collar is attached.**—The inside collar line may be longer than the garment neck line. This may be caused by failing to alter the collar after changing the neck line.

Rip the collar from the dress. Measure the dress neck line accurately from center back to center front, holding the edge of the measuring tape along the seam line. The stitching line of the collar should be twice this length. Take out the difference on each side of the center front of the collar. Pin the collar to the neck line and baste, easing the neck line slightly and holding the collar taut. Try on the dress again and be sure it is satisfactory before stitching.

**Convertible collar stands away from neck.**—The collar is too long for the dress neck line or the latter is too large.

Rip the collar from the dress. If the dress neck line fits correctly, measure it carefully along the stitching line. Then measure the inside collar length. If these measurements are not the same, take off the extra collar length at the ends. Pin the collar back in place and baste to the neck line. Try on the dress and see if the collar fits properly before stitching.

**Straight collar rolls too high and rides the back of the neck.**—The inside collar line may be too straight or the neck line of the dress too high at the back.

Rip the collar from the dress. If the neck line is much too high, trim it out slightly in the back. Otherwise, try basting the collar on with a seam deep enough to reduce the roll of the collar at the back. Or trim off the back of the collar. If this makes the collar too long, take deeper seams at front edges.

**Wrinkles where notched collar joins to facing.**—The facing may have been eased onto the collar or carelessly joined. Perhaps the curved edge of the facing was not clipped properly or the collar was too long.

Rip the collar from the facing up to the shoulder line. Make certain the neck edge of the facing has been clipped in several places almost the depth of the seam allowance. Repin and baste collar and facing together again. If the collar still does not fit smoothly, shorten it by taking deeper seams at the ends. Trim seams to their usual width.

## FITTING THE BUST AND BACK

The comfort of the waist of a dress depends much on the fit over the bust and across the back. Avoid extremes of fit—too tight is neither comfortable nor attractive; too loose looks untidy. If the wearer has a large bust but small abdomen and hips, fit the dress a little loosely below

the bust so the blouse does not outline the bust too closely. Be sure there is enough fullness under the bust in front and enough room for the shoulder blades in the back. The center front and back may be smooth and free from gathers unless the style calls for a different effect. Taking in or releasing darts at the waistline may improve the fit.

**Cloth draws across bust.**—If the dress draws across the bust perhaps the grain of the goods has been dropped or raised on either side of the bust. Or the waist may have been cut too narrow at the bust line. These troubles usually appear when the figure is overly erect or has a large bust.

If the crosswise grain of the goods is straight but still the waist looks drawn, let out the front (or both back and front) underarm seams until the waist fits easily. When the seam allowance is too small to let out underarm seams, set in a straight matched or bias piece of cloth at the underarm seams for extra width. Let out the underarm seams in the sleeves accordingly or if necessary, set in a piece here, too.

If the grain of the goods is not right, rip the underarm seams and try changing the size and position of the underarm darts and the location of the fullness at the waist. If the dress has no underarm dart, and the waist length permits, it may help to place one or more darts in the front edge of the underarm seam in line with the bust.

**Diagonal wrinkles from bust line to underarm waistline.**—The lower front edge of the blouse swings out and up. The underarm seam swings to the front (fig. 10, A). This often occurs when the figure is overly erect or has a prominent bust. Such figures require more length than the pattern allowed between shoulder and bust or between bust and waistline, depending upon the height of the bust.

If the waist of the dress does not reach the waistline in the center front, the pattern must be altered and a new front cut. When there is sufficient length, rip open the underarm and shoulder seams. Let down the center front of the waist by tapering the seam allowance on the front shoulder to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch at the neck edge. Then lift the lower waist front with one or more small darts at the underarm. (See fig. 10, B.) In addition, more fullness in gathers or darts may be needed under the bust. Let out the front side of the underarm seam. This gives width across the bust and allows additional fullness under the bust. The seam allowance on the back is left unchanged.

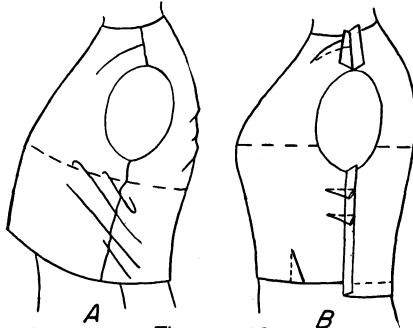


Figure 10

**An undesirable fold or fullness at armhole in front near chest line.**—A figure with a prominent shoulder bone and full bust often has a hollow place near the armhole. The dress may puff out there (fig. 11, A). This is more prominent if the armhole seam is too high at the armpit. (See p. 19.)

If the armhole seam allowance is wide enough at the front shoulder line, remove the puff with a front shoulder dart. Pin, baste, and fit again. If the seam allowance is skimpy, rip shoulder and underarm seams. Raise the shoulder front more at the armhole, tapering seam to nothing at neck (fig. 11, B).

The puff can also be removed by an armhole dart in the lower half of the front armhole, extending down as far as possible toward the bust. This gives a close-fitting armhole. Or if the puff is small, sometimes it can be "shrunk" out before setting in the sleeve. Or it can be held in place with a row of small backstitches next to the seam line.

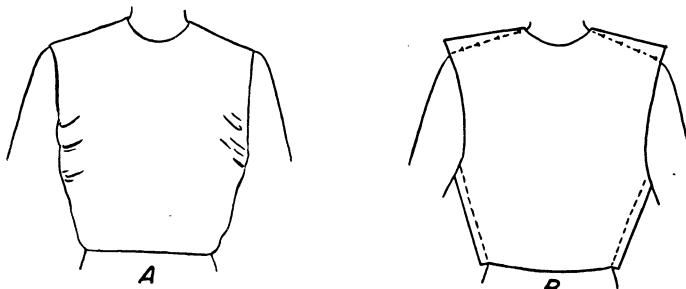


Figure 11

**Blouse sags below bust in front or below shoulder blades in the back.**—There are figures with a flat chest, flat or pendulous bust, or round shoulders. These figures are often shorter in front between shoulder and waistline than the pattern, which may fit well otherwise. As a result, the dress sags below the bust. On the other hand there are the overly erect figures or those with sway-backs. These figures do not take up the usual pattern length in the back between shoulder blades and waistline. The dress therefore sags below the shoulder blades.

If the dress sags below the bust, do not push extra blouse length below the waistline. Instead, rip the shoulder seams, raise the front shoulder seams until grain is straight across bust. The neck side of the front shoulder seams is taken up to fit. Taper to normal width near armhole.

When the blouse sags below the shoulder blades, rip the shoulder seams and lift the back of the blouse until the grain of the goods is straight across the upper back. Repin the shoulder seams, taking up more of the back shoulder seams at the neck end and tapering the seams toward the armholes. Keep the direction of the shoulder seams correct.

Mark a correct armhole line in the back. Avoid fitting the lower back of the blouse too close. Raise the waistline of the dress by slightly trimming out the center back of the top of the skirt.

**Underarm seam of blouse sags below armpit.**—Diagonal folds appear below the armhole; the sleeve cap may draw crosswise when the arm is raised. The armhole or perhaps the blouse is too large, permitting the crosswise grain of the goods to drop at the underarm seams. Or, the figure may have very slanting shoulders and more padding may be needed at the shoulders.

If padding has been used, try changing its size and place. When this does not remove the trouble, take deeper underarm seams, beginning at the armhole and tapering them as far down toward the waistline as needed. If necessary, take deeper shoulder seams near the armhole (fig. 12). This fitting brings the crosswise grain of the goods into the right position at the bust line. After this fitting cut the lower half of the armhole into a good curve; do not leave a pointed armhole.

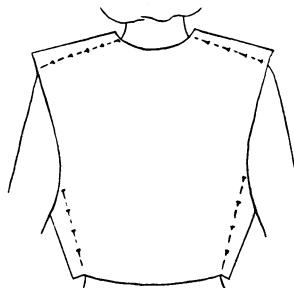


Figure 12

**Back of blouse draws at underarm seam just below armpit.**—(See fig. 13, A.) The pattern may have been too small around at the level of the bust or the figure may have a large muscle or roll of flesh across the back at the armpit level.

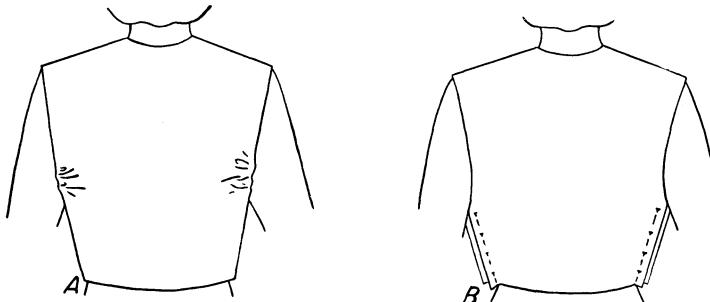


Figure 13

Rip the underarm seams, and let them out until the width across the back feels easy (fig. 13, B). Leave the front allowance unchanged. To fit the back smoothly, it may be necessary to change the shoulder seams. Rip them and lift the back edge near the armhole, tapering it to normal near the neck line.

**Diagonal wrinkles fall from shoulder blade to underarm.**—The blouse pulls up in center back and pokes out at the bottom. The underarm seam sags. The front neck line may be pulled back (fig. 14, A).

This fitting difficulty occurs most frequently on a figure with round shoulders, prominent shoulder blades, or a roll of flesh at the back of the neck. More length than the pattern allows is usually needed between the shoulder blades and the neck. In such cases the pattern should be altered before the dress is cut.

However, if this has not been done, the fit of the dress can sometimes be improved by ripping and releasing the back shoulder seams until the grain of the goods is straight across the upper back. Pin and refit the shoulder seam, letting it out near the neck line and taking it in at the

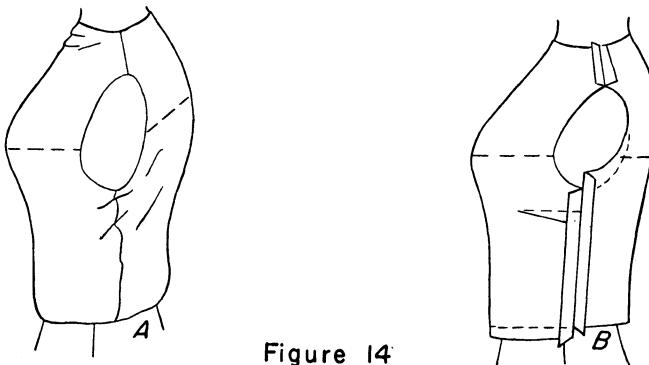


Figure 14

armhole. This may make it necessary to rip the underarm seams and refit the lower back. Take in the back of the underarm seams, trimming out the armhole if the back extends up into it, as shown in figure 14, B.

If becoming to the figure, a shoulder yoke, cut to fit properly, may be the only feasible solution to this problem.

## FITTING ARMHOLE AND SLEEVE

**Well-shaped armhole.**—When a dress is worn, the seam of a good armhole forms a smooth curve up onto and over the top of the shoulder bone and makes a straight line, back and front, down to the muscles joining the arm to the body. From there, it curves again under the arm, fitting as closely as is comfortable. If the armhole is not shaped correctly, the sleeve may pull or bind at the seams, and the neck line may be drawn away from the sides of the neck. In addition, the front and back of the blouse may draw or wrinkle at the front or back armhole line.

**Well-fitting sleeves.**—If the sleeves are not properly set into the armhole and carefully fitted, the entire dress is spoiled. So give special attention to this part of fitting dresses and blouses (fig. 15). Properly fitted,

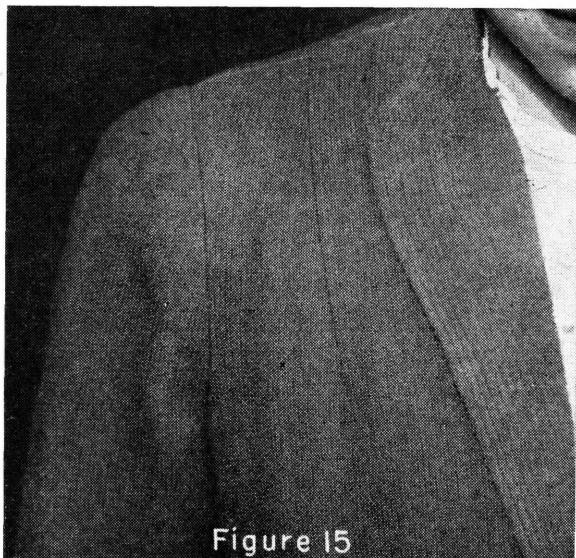


Figure 15

Figure 15 shows a well-fitting sleeve. The sleeve hangs straight down from the high point of shoulder when the arm hangs naturally at the side. Lengthwise yarns run straight down from top of shoulder to elbow. Crosswise yarns of sleeve cap are parallel to the floor at armpit level. The inside seam is in line with the thumb.

the sleeve appears to be smoothly set into the armhole rather than the armhole into the sleeve. The armhole line does not draw or pull the blouse.

A long sleeve should come well down over the wristbone when the arm hangs at the side. A good test for both length and roominess in a long sleeve is to bend the arm until the fingertips touch the ears. The sleeve should not draw or pull when the arms are in this position.

**Putting in the sleeves.**—The fit of a sleeve often depends upon how it is pinned and basted in the armhole. First see that the armhole line is good. See that all seams entering the armhole are finished and pressed. Make sure that the sleeves are cut as mates and marked. Run two gathering threads over the top of the sleeve between the notches—one, the seam's depth from the cut edge, the other about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch out from this and in the seam allowance (fig. 16, A).

Work from the inside of the dress with the sleeve right side out and the blouse wrong side out. Pin the right sleeve into the right armhole, matching notches and the highest point of the sleeve with the shoulder seam. Also match the lowest seam of the sleeve with the lowest part of the armhole. With the sleeve side toward you, place pins in the seam line at right angles to the edge, first at the top and bottom, and then at the side notches (fig. 16, B).

Smooth the lower half of the sleeve cap into the armhole with little or no fullness. Hold in place with a few pins. A very plump arm may need more ease here than a slender one. A plain sleeve top will have about 2

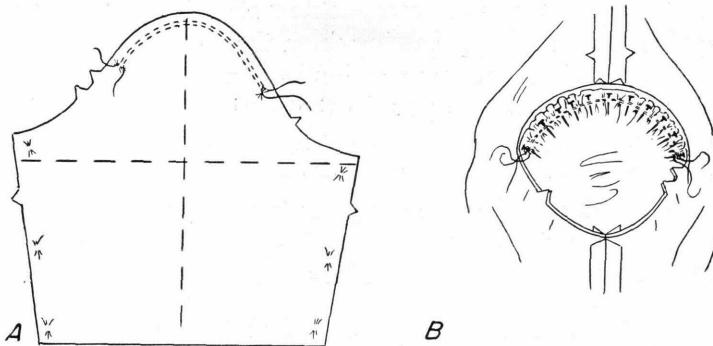


Figure 16

inches of extra fullness to be eased into the top. Draw up and fasten gathering threads. Avoid drawing them too tight. Keep the sleeve fairly smooth over the top to the point where both the armhole and the sleeve begin to curve down. From there, ease the extra fullness into the armhole evenly with no pleats or folds on the stitching line. Pin to hold fullness in place. If the shoulder seam slants decidedly to the back, the top of the sleeve will have to be placed slightly to the front of it.

Pin and baste on the seam line, working from the sleeve side. Use small bastings, particularly where the fullness is eased. Pin and baste the other sleeve into the armhole. Remove the pins and try on the blouse before stitching with the machine.

**Sleeve puffs up at top.**—The sleeve-cap fullness may not be evenly distributed. Or, the sleeve cap may be too wide or too high, especially if the shoulder or underarm seams of the blouse have been taken in.

If the puffiness cannot be removed by adjusting the fullness, the sleeve cap is probably too wide. It will need refitting. To do this easily, have someone help you. Put on the dress, insert the shoulder pads if used, and fasten the dress properly. Direct your helper to work from the right side as follows: Clip the basting threads a few at a time at points of puffiness. Turn under the sleeve at these points to take out the extra material in the sleeve cap. Put pins at right angles to the seam line. (See fig. 17.) Always keep the crosswise and lengthwise grains of the goods in the sleeve cap straight. Adjust the other sleeve if necessary.

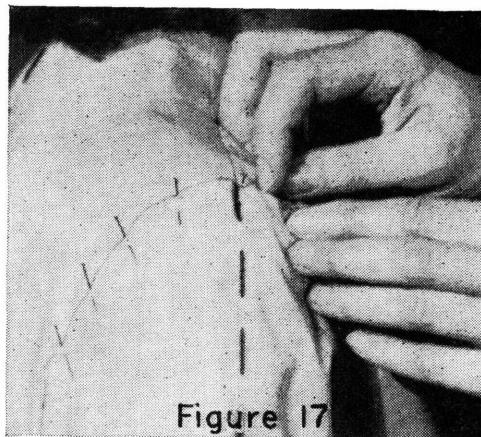


Figure 17

Remove the dress, mark or baste the new stitching line, smoothing out any irregular places. A top basting from the right side is one easy way to mark and hold the new seam or stitching line. Try on the dress to be sure the fit is correct before you do the final machine stitching on the armhole seam.

When the sleeve cap puffs at the back near the top, the back curve of the sleeve cap is too high; when it puffs in front, the front curve is too high. To remove this fullness, take a deeper seam on the sleeve at this point but leave the armhole seam as it is on the blouse.

**Sleeve too loose.**—If the sleeve is only slightly large, take in the under-arm seam, sloping it from the armhole. Baste and fit.

If the top of the sleeve is much too large, it may need recutting. Rip the sleeve out, and make it smaller by taking lengthwise folds on either side of the top of the sleeve. Cut a pattern like the altered sleeve, reshaping the cap. Smooth out dress sleeve. Then recut the entire sleeve, using the altered pattern. If the sleeve is too large all the way down, take out the fullness the full length of the sleeve.

**Diagonal wrinkles from top of sleeve to underarm.**—The lower edge of the sleeve sticks out. (See fig. 18, A.) The crosswise grain of the goods is pulled up in the top of the sleeve cap. This happens when a woman has very square shoulders or large muscles on the top of her arm, or if the sleeve cap is too short.

If the sleeve cap is only a little short and there is a generous seam allowance, rip out upper half of armhole seam and drop sleeve until the crosswise grain of goods is straight at armhole level (fig. 18, B).

If this cannot be done, rip the armhole seam except an inch or two at the top. Put on the dress. Then, while standing before a mirror (or better still, with the help of someone else), lift the under part of the sleeve up in the armhole until the crosswise grain of the goods lies straight across the upper arm. Pin in place to hold until the dress is removed. Ease sleeve into lower half of armhole, pin and baste in place (p. 21).

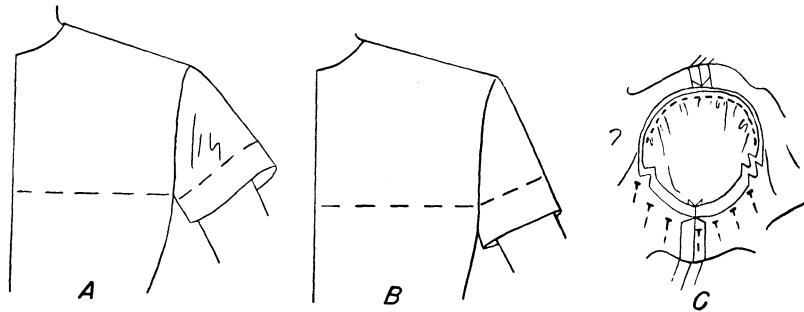


Figure 18

The lower half of the sleeve will extend above the lower edge of the armhole (fig. 18, *C*). Try on the dress again to check fit before cutting away this extra material on the sleeve.

**Sleeve draws across the arm near armpit level.**—Wrinkles across the sleeve cap extend in from the armhole on a level with the chest.

The sleeve cap is too narrow or a wider armhole seam may have been taken than was allowed by the pattern. The upper arm may be too large for the sleeve, causing it to be tight and to draw up, forming wrinkles in the sleeve cap. The armhole may be too high. In that case there will also be crosswise wrinkles on the blouse at the bottom of the armhole.

Use one of the following changes if the sleeve is too small:

1. If the seams are wide enough, let out the sleeve and waist seams on each side of the armhole.
2. If the sleeve is long enough, raise it and recut the top, adding extra width at each side of the sleeve cap. Refit the sleeve in the armhole. Mark a new bottom line. It may be necessary to face the lower edge of the sleeve.
3. Release the underarm seam of the sleeve until it is comfortable. Ease in the extra fullness around the top or, on a large arm, ease in a little fullness in the sleeve at the underarm side.
4. If the underarm sleeve seam is too narrow to be let out, set a gusset in the underarm seam of the waist at the armpit line and also set a similar piece in the sleeve (fig. 19).
5. If the sleeve armhole is too high, trim out the underarm of both the blouse and the sleeve. Be very careful not to cut the armhole too low and to leave a good seam allowance.

**Wrinkles form in front and back of blouse below the arm.**—The sleeve may also have lengthwise wrinkles under the arm. These fitting difficulties arise when the blouse is too narrow or fitted too closely at the underarm seams and in the armhole. The figure may have a roll of flesh directly under the arm and extending to the back.

Release the underarm seams of the blouse to give more room across the bust. If the armhole is too snug, carefully clip it at intervals at the tight places. Avoid clipping too deep or beyond the seam allowance. Examine the fit of the lower half of the armhole. If the armhole in the

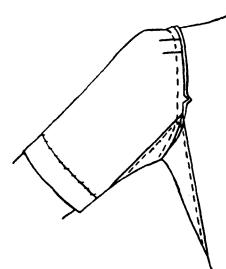


Figure 19

blouse was slightly eased into the sleeve around the lower half, wrinkles may result. Rip out the sleeve and refit the lower half of the armhole.

**Sleeve cap twists to back or front.**—When a sleeve cap twists to the back, the crosswise grain of the goods in the cap pulls down in the back and up in the front. The lengthwise grain slants toward the back at the top. On the other hand, when a sleeve cap twists to the front, the crosswise grain of the goods in the cap slopes up to the back and the lengthwise yarns slant toward the front at the top.

The sleeve may have been set into the wrong armhole. Or perhaps, when cutting out the sleeve, the pattern was not laid correctly with the grain of the goods. Twisting to the back may be caused by too much fullness at the back of the sleeve cap. Or perhaps the sleeve pattern was too short at the back, or there is not enough room at the elbow. The shoulder bone on the figure may be more prominent than was allowed for by the pattern. Twisting to the front may be caused by too much fullness at the front of the sleeve cap.

Check the sleeve with the pattern, noting the location of notches in the sleeve cap and armhole. Check the marks for the elbow. If the sleeves are in the wrong armholes, exchange them and fit again.

If a sleeve has not been cut correctly on the grain of the cloth, no amount of fitting will prevent twisting. The best solution is to recut the sleeve. This may mean changing the style of the sleeve if material is limited.

If too much fullness has been put toward either the back or the front of the sleeve, rip the top half of the armhole seam and shift the fullness, bringing the lengthwise yarns into the right position. (See p. 16.)

When many changes are needed, rip the sleeve from the armhole and fit the sleeve while the dress is on the figure. (See pp. 17 and 18.)

**Underarm sleeve seam twists to back or front.**—If the underarm sleeve seam pulls the top of the sleeve to the back, the back underarm sleeve seam may be too short or the elbow fullness incorrectly placed. If there is plenty of elbow fullness, rip the seam and release some of the fullness, pushing it up higher. This gives more elbowroom and helps to straighten the grain of the goods between elbow and armhole.

If the lower underarm seam twists to the front it may be because there is not enough room at the elbow. Rip the seam below the elbow. Push additional fullness into elbow darts or gathers. Pin and fit the lower part of the sleeve. This will shorten the sleeve and you may have to change the sleeves to a three-quarter length.

**Back of blouse pulls at armhole line.**—The sleeve binds. At the narrow part of the back, crosswise wrinkles extend from the armhole toward the center of the back (fig. 20, A). The wrinkles may also extend across the sleeve cap. The dress may be too narrow across the back.

When the armhole seam allowance permits, let out both the back and the sleeve.

If wrinkles occur only in the back of the blouse at the armhole curve, the sleeve cap may not be deep enough. In other words, the back armhole line is too long for the depth of the sleeve cap. In addition, the sleeve is probably too small for the armhole. To give more depth to the sleeve cap, rip out the sleeve from the armhole and raise the lower or under half of the sleeve cap (fig. 20, B). The extra material on the sleeve seam should be trimmed out after, and not before, the armhole seam is completed. Pin, baste, and refit.

**Armhole tight, with crosswise wrinkles in blouse from armhole and lengthwise wrinkles extending down at undersleeve.**—Such wrinkles (fig. 21, A) occur when the armhole is too tight or too high at the underarm. Or the sleeve may be too tight at the armpit level.

If the armhole is too snug, rip out the sleeve and mark a new armhole line. Refit the sleeve into the new armhole line, keeping the crosswise grain straight across at the armpit level.

Sometimes the armhole is too high at the underarm, yet the sleeve fits well over the top of the arm. To adjust this, rip the armhole stitching under the arm, baste a new, lower seam line (fig. 21, B). Try on the blouse again. If necessary, trim out the armhole a little to test the fit. More can be trimmed off when the seam line is definitely fixed. If the sleeve is too tight, let it out as much as possible. Extra fullness can be eased into the upper half of the sleeve cap.

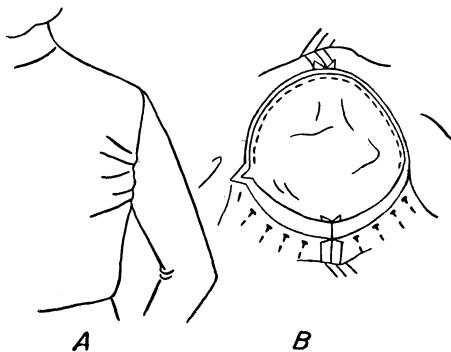


Figure 20

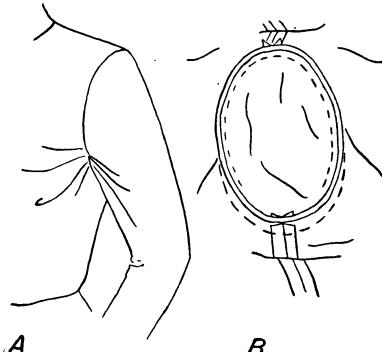


Figure 21

## FITTING THE WAISTLINE

Where the waistline of a dress should be placed—at, above, or below the normal waistline—depends on the style of the dress and the position most becoming to the figure. To find the normal waistline, place the hands with the curves between forefingers and thumbs in line with the lowest rib or the slight body indentation. The forefinger curving around to the front and the thumb curving around to the back indicate the normal waistline. The waistline of a dress is usually made slightly higher in back than in front but gives the effect of a straight line.

A snugly fitting waistline helps keep the skirt as well as the blouse in proper position. When fitting the waistline, keep the seam lines and darts entering the waistline at right angles to the floor. Special style features might indicate otherwise. On pleated skirts that must be straight at the lower edge, the bottom is finished first and the length adjustments made at the waistline.

**Skirt too loose at waistline or hip.**—The pattern may be too large for the hips and waist of the figure. Or the waistline may not be properly fitted and may slip down below the belt line.

A slight amount of extra width can be taken out by deeper seam lines. Side back darts also help to shape a skirt into a smaller waistline. Extra fullness in the blouse waistline is eased into gathers or darts.

If the skirt is much too large, refit it. Rip the side seams to below the hip line. Put on the skirt, right side out. Pin front, back, and side waistline to the foundation garment. Fold under a deeper seam allowance on front side seam. Lap this over the back seam. Place pins at right angles to fold. (See fig. 22.) Work first from hip line to waistline, then from hip line to hem line. Keep crosswise grain of goods straight across hip line. Keep underarm seam line straight directly under armpit. Adjust both side seams and, if necessary, any other seam line. Remove the skirt. Use top basting to mark and hold new seam line. After basting, try on again before final stitching.

**Skirt too tight at waistline or hip.**—The waistline of the figure may be larger than the waistline of the pattern or dress.

Let out any seam allowances as well as skirt darts in order to straighten them and relieve the strain. If there is not enough seam allowance, insert a gusset above and below the waistline in the side seams to give extra width. Taper the gussets to fit the figure. Facings, hem, or belt may be used for the gusset.

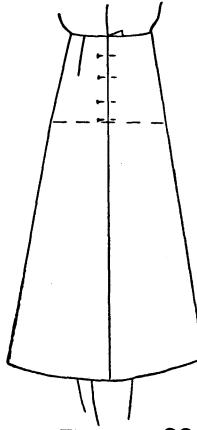


Figure 22

**Lower edge of skirt pokes out in front.**—The side seams swing forward and diagonal wrinkles extend from the center front of the waistline toward the hem. (See fig. 23, A.) This may be because the blouse is so short in front that it pulls up the grain of the goods in the skirt. If this is the case, it can be corrected by following the instruction (see below) under "Waistline Pulled up Above Belt," or by raising the back of the skirt slightly at the waistline. This brings the crosswise grain of the goods at the hips parallel to the floor and straightens the side seams. Mark the correct waistline on the skirt and blouse.

Another way to correct this difficulty is to rip the side seams and front waistline. Lift the front of the skirt at the sides until the grain of the cloth is straight across the hip line (fig. 23, B). Pin and baste the side seams. Fit the waistline, tapering the seam allowance on the skirt to normal width at the center front. Baste and try on again before stitching.

**Blouse sags over belt in front or back.**—The blouse is too long between the bust line or shoulder blades and the waistline. This often occurs on a short-waisted or sway-backed figure.

Rip the blouse from the skirt wherever the extra length is located. Tie a cord over the blouse at the waistline, leaving some fullness above the cord for comfort. Keep the grain of the goods straight across the bust and the back. Mark the new waistline along the cord with pins or chalk. Take off the blouse and fold it so that the corresponding seam lines are together. It helps to pull one sleeve into the other. Pin the sides and lower edges together. Even up the pinned or chalked waistline, adding a seam allowance. Cut away the extra length. With the help of the pattern, mark again the position of the waist fullness, front and back.

**Waistline pulled up above belt.**—The blouse is too short. Women with prominent busts have this fitting difficulty.

If the seam allowance at bottom of the blouse is wide enough, rip the blouse from the skirt and let out the seam. If this cannot be done, insert a piecing that is wider in center front and tapers to nothing at side seams. The belt will cover the inset. If matching cloth is available, a belt can be set in between waist and skirt. An inch or an inch and a half can be added to the length of the blouse in this way.

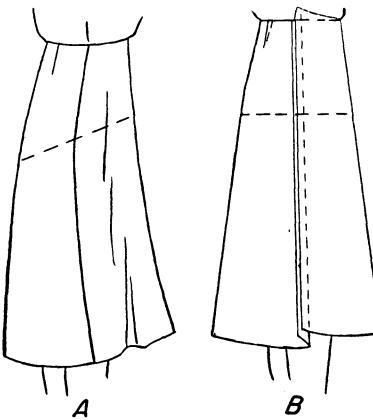


Figure 23

## FITTING THE HIPS

When a skirt fits correctly, the center front and center back hang straight down without swinging out in front or back. The side seams also hang straight down, giving the appearance of continuing the underarm seams of the waist. The crosswise grain of the goods is parallel to the floor. The space between the waist and the hips is fitted smoothly but not tightly. The only exceptions to these rules are skirts with special style features.

The first step in fitting a skirt is to see that the crosswise grain of the goods is in a straight line around the hip line. If it is not, raise or lower the waistline at the points where the grain is out of line or rip the skirt at the seams and raise or lower the sides as necessary.

A well-fitting skirt of any kind, plain or fancy, does not draw or pull when the wearer is sitting or standing. When the fitting is complete, ask the wearer to sit and also to move around naturally to see if the skirt will be comfortable and will hang gracefully when worn.

**Side seams of skirt are crooked and puckered.**—The dress may be poorly sewed together. Careless joining of the side seams (one seam edge eased too much onto the other), crooked stitching, or too tight sewing-machine tension will cause puckered seams.

Restitch a straight seam line if stitching is crooked, or loosen any tight sections in the seam. Otherwise, open the side seams, pin, and baste, matching the grain of the cloth at the hip line. Avoid drawing the basting thread too tight. Try on. If satisfactory, stitch carefully.

**Skirt draws across hips and tends to ride up.**—The skirt is too small. If the side seams are wide enough, let them out until there is no strain across the hips. Keep the side seams hanging straight. If there is not sufficient seam allowance for this and the skirt is long enough, raise the skirt at the waistline and refit it. It may be necessary to face the hem.

**Skirt cups in the back and side seams swing forward.**—The back of skirt may be too long between the waist and hips—thus allowing the grain of the goods to drop at the hip line. This causes the side seams to swing forward. (See fig. 24, A.)

Raise the skirt at the back waistline until the grain of the goods is straight across at the hips (fig. 24, B). If this makes extra fullness at the waistline, take it out in two darts. Trim off the top of the skirt in the back, at the waistline.

If the dress is one-piece, without a waistline seam, rip the underarm seams, raise the back at the shoulders, then recut the back neck and armhole lines.

**Lower edge of skirt swings out in back.**—The side seams swing back. (See fig. 25, A.) This may be because the figure has a sway-back and large hips. Extra length is therefore needed in the back of the skirt. Sometimes the crosswise grain of the goods is pulled up out of line. In some cases, the flare of the skirt in the back may be too pronounced for the type of cloth used.

Rip the back of the skirt from the waistline, letting out any extra seam allowance so as to drop the back of the skirt and thus straighten the crosswise grain.

If the seam allowance is too small to let out the seam, rip the skirt and waist apart, and lift the front and side front gores of the skirt until the crosswise grain of the goods is straight all around the hip line (fig. 25, B). Mark a new waistline on the skirt, pin, baste, and try on again before stitching on the machine.

When the grain of the goods is straight at the hip line and the trouble seems to be only in the flare of the skirt, it may be eased out some in the seams.

**Crosswise folds across the back between waist and hips.**—The skirt may be too tight at the hips or the figure may have a sway-back.

If the skirt is too tight, rip the side seams (if necessary, also the back gore seams) and let the skirt drop into an easy position. Pin and baste.

If the side seams are too narrow to let out, raise the skirt at the back so as to take out the folds, keeping the crosswise grain of the goods straight across the back hip line (fig. 24, B). Trim off the extra goods at the waist. If there is extra fullness at the waistline, take it up in the seams or, if necessary, in back skirt darts.

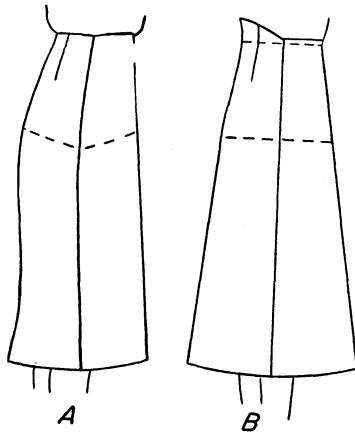


Figure 24

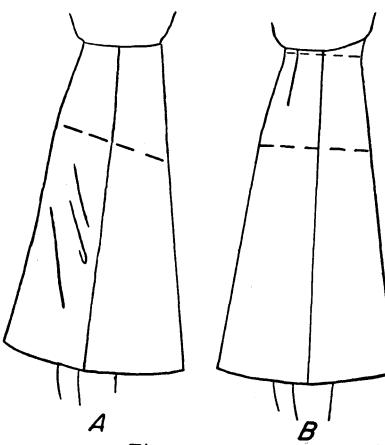


Figure 25

## HEM DIFFICULTIES

**Pleats at hem line spread and sag.**—On a skirt with one or more pleats, the hem line and the lower pleat edge may not be turned on the straight of the goods. In other cases, the tops of the pleat insets may not be properly tacked in place. Or the waistline may be fitted so loosely that the weight of the pleats pulls the skirt down from the waistline unevenly. Or the dress may be so tight that the pleats spread (fig. 26, A).

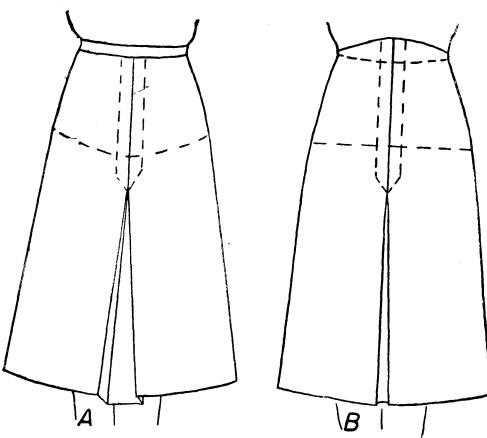


Figure 26

Often rehemming the pleat insets corrects the sagging. When the pleated section extends part way up from the bottom, tack the top of the section to the skirt or reinforce it by stitching on the right side.

On a straight pleated skirt or one with inverted or side pleats, lift the sagging sections of the pleats at the waistline or yoke line until the pleats fall straight and do not spread. (See fig. 26, B.) Or, if the seam allowance permits, lower the other sections of the skirt from the top.

When necessary, tighten the waistline by taking up extra fullness at the seams or in hip darts. This holds the skirt up in the proper position.

If the skirt was fitted too tightly, let out the side seams to give additional width.

**Hem line is uneven.**—An uneven hem line is often due to poor cutting, or making a waistline too loose or a skirt too wide at the hips. Sometimes the trouble is that the belt to be worn with the dress was not put on before the hem was marked. In such cases, refit the dress at the waistline or hip line, and then mark a new skirt length. It is well to let a dress hang, to stretch out, for a day before marking the hem.

## FITTING THE READY-MADE DRESS

Never buy a ready-made dress without trying it on and carefully studying it before a full-length mirror. Take time to fit it over the type of underclothing with which it will be worn.

It is often not easy, practical, or possible to alter a ready-made dress. So, unless your choice is very limited, avoid buying one that requires many or complicated changes. If you cannot find a dress that fits throughout, it is usually best to buy one that fits the upper part of the

body. The skirt is less difficult to alter than the waist. But, if a part of your body is particularly hard to fit, buy clothes that fit there—whether it is your hips, bust, or shoulders.

If alterations must be made, choose a style that can readily be changed. Fussy designs, complicated details, many insets—all these make fitting more difficult. Examine the hem, seams, and waistline to see if there is enough cloth to allow for changes.

Remember that if seams are let out, the previous stitching line will show on some kinds of material—jersey, for example. Many misfits cannot be remedied. A narrow sleeve cap or back cannot be satisfactorily enlarged by letting out seams unless there are wide allowances. Narrow seams in these places soon tear out. In such cases, look for another dress. Other handicaps in altering ready-made dresses include the time spent in taking out seams and stitching lines, the possibility of fabrics stretching when seams are ripped, and pressing marks that cannot be removed.

Unless the needed alterations are simple or few in number, think carefully before purchasing a poorly fitting dress. Often one apparently simple alteration calls for another until the dress is practically remade before the job is done.

## **TYPICAL ALTERATIONS ON READY-MADE DRESSES**

It pays to be very cautious when making changes in ready-to-wear dresses. Rip only as much as is absolutely necessary. Clip the machine stitching between the places to be changed. Remove the stitching carefully to avoid pulling or tearing the cloth. Press the edges of opened seams, being careful not to stretch them. This makes changes, cutting, and trimming easier.

Since the dress is already stitched, it may not be possible to use the same fitting procedures on a dress you buy as on one you are making. Use the method that takes the least amount of change to get the best effect. Some of the fitting difficulties frequently found and satisfactorily remedied on ready-made dresses are described below.

***Shoulder seams too far to front or back.***—Change the shoulder seams to fit as suggested on page 7. If this is not possible, it is best not to buy the dress.

***Shoulder seams too long.***—On some types of dresses, a few neck-line darts in the back may pull long shoulders up enough. (See p. 10.) This may require changing the collar. To do this, follow the instructions given on page 11. Another remedy is to rip the shoulder seams and take up the extra length in a front and back shoulder dart.

**Back neck line is too wide and stands away from neck.**—Two or three neck-line darts at the back will correct this. (See p. 10.)

**Crosswise folds at back of neck line.**—Rip off the neck-line facing or other finish and clip the back line to relieve the strain. (See p. 10.) If there are back neck-line darts, releasing their width or length will also help remove such folds.

**Neck line too high in front.**—Cutting down the neck in front or letting out the front shoulder seams may remedy this trouble. (See p. 10.) If the dress has a collar, this alteration may require refitting the collar.

**Armhole too tight.**—On some ready-made dresses, the armhole seam is finished with a binding or several rows of machine stitching. Ripping off this binding or taking out all but one row of stitching will sometimes give enough room to make an otherwise tight armhole comfortable. However, in many cases, this weakens the armhole and usually is not advisable. Overcasting and a row of very close stitching along seam edges will help strengthen the armhole if this must be done. If the armhole is very tight, it may have to be trimmed out and the sleeve refitted.

**Sleeve cap twists.**—Shift the top fullness, as described on page 20.

**Sleeve too long.**—Mark the correct length and take up the extra material in a hem or trim it off.

**Sleeve too short.**—If there is a hem, let it down. Otherwise adding a contrasting ruffling, or collar and cuff set may solve the difficulty.

**Sleeve uncomfortable because elbow fullness is misplaced.**—Rip the sleeve seam between points above and below the elbow. If there are darts, rip them out also and press the sleeve. Then try on the blouse to find the correct place for the elbow fullness. (See p. 20.) Make new darts and restitch the sleeve seam.

**Bust line too tight.**—Be sure you are wearing a properly fitted brassiere. This helps make a blouse fit well. If it is necessary to alter the dress, follow the instructions given on page 12 for letting out underarm seams and changing the location of darts.

**Waistline fullness poorly placed.**—The blouse may draw at the bust or waist because the fullness has not been placed properly. Rip the waist from the skirt and shift the gathers or darts so they come directly under the bust in the front and under the shoulder blades in the back. (See p. 12.) If the material is strained, releasing the waistline darts will give some extra fullness.

**Waistline too tight.**—Let out the skirt seams or the skirt darts (see p. 22), graduating them to the hip line. Distribute the lower blouse fullness to fit the new waistline.

**Waistline slightly loose or stretched.**—Hold the extra fullness in place by stitching a tape or ribbon of the proper waistline length to the waistline seam.

**Waist too long in back.**—Rip the waistline where the extra length is located. Push it down below the skirt top, and distribute the waist fullness. Repin the skirt on the new waistline. Trim off the extra material on the wrong side. (See p. 23.)

**Crosswise folds in back of skirt near waistline.**—Rip the waistline seam across the back. Take up extra skirt length as described on page 25.

**Belt too long.**—Mark the correct belt length. Remove extra length from the buckle end.

**Skirt too loose at hips.**—Take in the seams, as described on page 22.

**Skirt too tight.**—If seam allowances are wide enough, rip the seams and let them out as much as is needed. (See p. 22.) Even an eighth of an inch on several seams will often give sufficient extra room. Or raise the skirt (p. 25) if the length permits, and refit the waistline.

**Side seams crooked and puckered.**—The skirt may be too tight at the hip line. See page 24 for a method of checking and adjusting the width of the skirt. Examine the stitching lines carefully and if they are crooked or the stitching is too tight, rip the seams and restitch.

**Ends of pleated sections pull.**—Notice if there is a strain on the stitching at the ends of pleats. This often shows up on hip-length pleats when the wearer sits. Rip the stitching line a few inches to relieve the strain and prevent the skirt from pulling at those points. If the pleat inset is too short to do this, reinforce the pleat ends with tape or extra stitching.

**Hem uneven.**—Most ready-made dresses need to have the skirt length checked and the hem adjusted. Be sure the waistline and the hip line have been fitted properly before trying to mark the length.

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*Issued by*

**BUREAU OF HUMAN NUTRITION AND HOME ECONOMICS  
Agricultural Research Administration  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D. C.  
January 1945**